

Guilty! -- of What!

"It is not generally understood that the number of political and industrial prisoners in the United States, sentenced merely for expression of opinion or membership in an organization, has been **STEADILY INCREASING**. There are more convictions now under state and local laws than there were under federal law."

This quotation is from a review issued by the American Civil Liberties Union. Many people have thought of the political prosecutions as an affair of war and the Espionage Act. The fact is that prosecutions of this character are not of the war, but of the **class war**.

The Espionage prosecutions, by the federal government, for the most part, were only a veiled form of attack against the spokesmen of the working class. In "peace," as in war, the same use of the governmental power goes on. Capitalism defends itself, through government, like every past system of privilege and oppression, by the attempt to throttle the ideas and the inspiration of action against it by the oppressed class.

"Criminal Syndicalism."

Now the prosecutions are being carried on primarily by the states, under "criminal syndicalism" and like laws. All that is needed for conviction and long imprisonment under these laws is proof of loyalty to the working class and belief that a new system must replace capitalism. Such has been the result of the trials in New York, New Jersey, California, Illinois, etc. Another big "conspiracy" trial occurs shortly at Chicago; 85 members of the Communist Party were indicted in January;—about 25 are about to be tried. The Communist Labor "conspiracy" case, with 20 sentenced to prison, is in process of appeal.

Trials and appeals are pending in New York, New Jersey, in other states.

Deportation.

The deportation hurricane—the attempt to bully the "alien" proletarians into craven submissiveness—has abated. We have won most of the cases, but the bills are not paid. Thousands of dollars must be repaid to those who loaned every penny in the hour of crisis. There are urgent cases of family relief, of those deported and of those in jail. Funds are needed to pay for bail. The working class has no property to use for bail; this can only be secured by payment of fees.

New deportation cases, not by the hundreds but in the less dramatic way of two and threes, or one at a time, are coming up constantly.

The Workers' Fight.

There is no place to look for defense and relief funds except to the working class. This is the workers' fight, and everyone now knows it. There is practically no help from the "liberals." Nor is there any working-class organization now in shape to handle the situation. Particularly the Communists, since the raids, have been unable to take care of themselves. No matter how much or how little you know about Communism; no matter how much you agree or disagree;—you know that this is one phase of the class war into which you as a worker are thrust, no matter what you think about it. You either help those who meet the front-line shock of this fight—or you desert!

Funds Are Urgently Needed—Now!

Make remittance payable to I. E. Ferguson, Treasurer, and mail to Room 303—166 W. Washington St., Chicago, Ill.

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